



THE KILN

Issue 19

December 2008

Caring for our Cultural Heritage and its Environment
A safe Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all



www.vicnet.net.au/~fofkk

FAREWELL TO KEN AND DAWN BANKS

When we joined the FoKK we met a lot of lovely people. Two that stood out from the crowd were Dawn and Ken Banks. Dawn is always the first person to set up our kitchen, fill the billy and organize things for the needs of the Friends group. Even when Dawn was going through a very bad time with her health, she was always there helping out. Her input has been greatly valued not only at our working bees, but also at our festivals where she has worked tirelessly. If there was ever a job to be done, Dawn would always raise her hand, and you knew the job would be done properly. Always bright and cheerful, you could always share a joke with her great sense of humour.



The fencing which was carried out around the grounds of the kilns was of great concern to Dawn, as she thought the boys' "straight eye" was slightly bent. Many times you could hear "Banksy, That's not straight"! Ken would duck for cover and I (Dick) would take the brunt of her stern, but fair criticism. Small in stature, she was large in heart, enthusiasm and life!

We have also been lucky to have Ken on our committee with his broad knowledge of how a committee should be run. He stood in and took over office when the need arose. He chaired meetings in a true professional manner. His worldly knowledge of how to tackle jobs for the Kilns was of great value, especially the motors on the saw bench, grinder and other mechanics we have on display. When parts were not available for these motors, Ken would often make or adapt engine parts to get them working again. His method of starting these motors was probably not OH&S approved, but it was a brilliant idea. At our working bees he was always the first to start and the last to leave. Even during lunch break, Dawn would be yelling "Banksy, Come and get it", and he would still be working. At our festival he worked tirelessly to entertain the public. He got a huge kick out of watching their expressions, especially when it back fired! Some people said he would never get these machines going, but these people obviously did not know Ken.

Unfortunately for us they are moving to windy Warrnambool and we hope they will keep in touch. They have been a huge asset to the FoKK and they have been greater friends to us. We wish them all the happiness in their new stomping grounds. Look out Warrnambool, the Banks are coming to town! How lucky they are. We miss you both already as do all the Friends of Kurth Kiln.

Best wishes and love to you both.

Kerri and Dick. ☐

CONTENTS

PAGE 1
Farewell
 Dick Cleary
Coming Events
New Members

PAGE 2
Ranger's Report
 Ralph Angelico
Farewell
 Riet Bouck
U3A Walk
 Ted Bouchier
Editorial

PAGE 3
AROUND THE KILN
Seniors Week
 Catherine Arthur
Cup Weekend
 Lyn Patton

PAGE 4 & 5
AMONGST FRIENDS
At the Show
 Ursula Klink
A Feed Tree
 Discovery

PAGE 6 & 7 & 8
REFLECTIONS
Running Empty
 by Ted Alderson
My Memories
 by Bryce Francis

Years of Service
Trees in Main St
 by Bill Parker

Membership Form

This Newsletter is published by the Friends of Kurth Kiln: a group of people concerned with the preservation of the heritage in the Kurth Kiln Site.

All Correspondence to: Friends of Kurth Kiln, P O Box 169 Woori Yallock Victoria 3139

t/f (03) 5967 4201 auk@e031.aone.net.au

COMING EVENTS

The Friends of Kurth Kiln meet regularly once a month on the second Saturday for a meeting and maintenance Working Bee at Kurth Kiln. The following Wednesday has been scheduled as a special Working Bee day until we catch up with the current back-log of outstanding work.

General Meetings / Working Bees on the second Saturday each month starting at 10am:

January 10	February 14	March 14
April 11 (Festival on 19)	May 9	June 11

We welcome our new Members:

Ann, Robert & Jon Hoff; Celia Mussie-Berlei; Cathy Binding; Joy Solomano; Laurie & Joyce Begg; Terry Willoughby; Ronald Clarke; George & Lyn Millman; Edward Alderson; Beverley van-der-Heyden; Joy Gillies;
and encourage their participation in the Friends of Kurth Kiln Group with whatever their favourite activity may be, whenever their circumstances permit them to do so,

RANGER'S REPORT

Parks Victoria congratulates Gary Pendlebury for being the new president of the Friends of Kurth Kiln and a welcome to Lyn Patton too! Welcome to all the new members also.

The outgoing president Dick Cleary has done a fantastic job and thanks to Kerri for her involvement and enthusiasm too. We are lucky to have Kerry and Dick still involved with the Friends of Kurth Kiln, while now living at Woodside.

Parks Victoria wishes Dawn and Ken Banks all the best with their move to Warrnambool. They have been wonderful supporters of the Friends of Kurth Kiln and over the years have always made themselves available for any tasks at Kurth Kiln. I always remember the time Ken worked on the motor on the circular saw and he finally got the first kick out of the motor. It was a loud single bang and then cheers from every one who heard the noise and then the biggest smile on Ken's face. It was one of those special times that make you feel proud to be involved with the wonderful Friends of Kurth Kiln.



The Kurth Kiln area looks good with all the work the Friends have achieved over the months. The maintenance work on the fence around the huts is nearly completed. The rotten posts, rails and pickets have been replaced. The huts have been stained with a timber waterproofing mixture and instructions supplied by Chris Smith, Parks Victoria Heritage. Alf and Jasper did a wonderful job mixing all the ingredients together without causing any harm to themselves! A new gate was installed on the fence for the Kurth Kiln Festival and this will certainly save the poor cowboy's manhood, as he used to step over the picket fence to escape from Mad Molly.

Thank you to Rod Stevens and Ray Cranston for removing the Wattle tree next to the picket fence that was leaning towards the huts – certainly has opened up the area for more light now!

The bridge rail over Tomahawk Creek Walking Track has been repaired after vandals threw the rails into the creek. Well done Celia and Rob. Ursula, Alf and Carmel did a fabulous job in the Seniors' week. A large amount of people utilized the opportunity for walks at Kurth Kiln and they did a wonderful job looking after every one. Alf gave talks on Kurth Kiln, while Ursula and Carmel took groups out for a walk.

Thank you to all the Friends of Kurth Kiln. Parks Victoria appreciates your wonderful work.
Cheers and Good Health.

Ralph Angelico

FAREWELL TO DICK & KERRI

There is so much to tell about Dick and Kerri, being committee members of our Friends of Kurth Kiln group that we could write a book about them. You both have been invaluable and as for the Festival we couldn't (and still can't) do without the help of you two. We are very happy that even now you live at Woodside you are still organising the next Festival scheduled for 19 April 2009.

We miss you already at our meetings, but wish you all the best at seaside Woodside. Please come up and see your friends at Kurth Kiln whenever possible.
Love to you both.

Henk and Riet Bouck

THE DIAMOND VALLEY U3A

A group of walkers, including Pat, Ann, Veronica, Joyce, Rita, Lex, Ann and Ted from the Diamond Valley U3A, went for a bushwalk in Kurth Kiln Regional Park on Sunday 26 October. On arrival we were made very welcome by Ursula and Alfred Klink. Ursula led the walk, first to Kurth Kiln, then down the Tomahawk Creek almost to Shepherds Creek Road, then back up the other side of Tomahawk Creek to Kurth Kiln where we had lunch. The walkers found the walk very enjoyable with the beautiful undulating scenery and the freely flowing creek.

After lunch Alfred joined us to give a talk about the history of the Kiln and Professor Kurth and his process of making charcoal from the Eucalyptus trees to supply fuel for cars during the second world war years. Pat remembered her grandfather driving his car from Mildura to Melbourne. On the back of the car was a "gas producer". Sometimes her grandfather needed to reverse uphill as the fuel had difficulty in getting to the motor. Ted recalled seeing cars on High Street Northcote with charcoal burners. Ted also related how families in Madagascar in 2004 had family businesses in harvesting Eucalyptus trees and burning them in pits, packing the charcoal in hessian bags and selling them on the side of the road. The charcoal was used for heating and cooking in some parts of Madagascar. We returned to Ursula's home for afternoon tea. We were extremely impressed with Ursula and Alfred's hospitality, their lovely energy efficient home, their garden and the telescope.

The Diamond Valley U3A bush walkers wish to thank the Friends of Kurth Kiln for a wonderful and exciting day.
Edward Bouchier

EDITORIAL

If, as they say, changes are the spices of life, then the Friends of Kurth Kiln have just had a well-seasoned year. Four of our active members have moved; we have a new President and Secretary (see opening article and Ranger's Report) and welcomed 15 new members, all in the last six months. Seniors' Week at Kurth Kiln was very popular, our thanks to R.I.C. Greg Young (see "Around the Kiln"). We hope you enjoy our reflections in this action-packed issue. AK

AROUND THE KILN

SENIORS' WEEK WALKS AND TALKS AT KURTH KILN

The 2008 Seniors' Week walks at Kurth Kiln were well attended.

On Thursday October 9 the City of Boroondara arranged for a busload of Seniors to participate in the "Go for your life" Seniors' Walk at Kurth Kiln. The number swelled by ten people, who read about the walk in the Events Program.

The Friends of Kurth Kiln gave the visitors a tour of the site and Alfred gave a talk about the history of Kurth Kiln and answered the many questions asked. Andrew from "Go for your life" spoke about healthy life styles and passed out show bags with information to improve your well being and energy level, healthy recipes, a pedometer and a "go for your life" tee shirt.



GO4YL2

A number of walking choices were offered for the visitors: Carmel from the Friends of Kurth Kiln led walks around the Thornton and Tomahawk Creek Track and Ursula joined in the long walk organised by the Melbourne Bushwalking Club.

The Long Walk route started off on Kurth Kiln Track, then through a narrow track to Gilwell Track. Everyone was

rewarded with a chocolate treat after having cheerfully mastered the hilly part. On level ground the walk continued on the track beside Gembrook Launching Place Road to Toms Track and downhill to Soldiers Road. From Soldiers Road the group turned into Scout Camp track. After a short stop near the Thornton Bridge, where Parks Victoria had just installed a new toilet block, the group walked past a "Father and Son" weekend camp and crossed the Tomahawk Creek. On the Thornton Track they inspected the three wombat hole home (who seemed not to be in residence) and admired the beautiful and serene Hazel Pomaderris forest, the majestic eucalyptus trees and the lush ferns. Crossing the dam at Kurth Kiln many stopped to watch the young resident duckling family swim in the dam.

Most people joined in one or more of the walks, Alfred stayed at the Kiln site with a few people who had walking difficulties. It was an enjoyable day, catering for individual preferences, an opportunity for the visitors to learn the history of Kurth Kiln, to become more informed in what is involved in leading a healthy lifestyle and to have a social get-together, including walking and seeing the native flora. Some visitors were experts in botany and able to name many of the plant species.

On Friday and Saturday smaller groups came for the Seniors' Walk; all but three opted for short walks. Ship Rock Falls viewing platform was the destination for the long walk. The Friends of Kurth Kiln thank the Victorian Seniors' Festival, the City of Boroondara and the "Go for your life" organisations, the Melbourne Bush Walking Club and Parks Victoria for helping to make Seniors' Week such a memorable occasion at Kurth Kiln.



Andrew from "Go for your life" explaining how the pedometer works



Proudly showing off the show bags

CUP WEEKEND AT KURTH KILN

On the Melbourne Cup weekend a few of us stayed in the huts at Kurth Kiln as caretakers over this busy time. What a beautiful weekend and when it rained it was even more so with the lovely fresh smell! Our new president Gary was in his element chatting to just about every visitor to the Kiln over the weekend.

Denise mowed and mowed and mowed. Gary, Ralph and Alfred fixed the door on the gas bottle cupboard while the ladies had a cup of tea and watched. Then Gary coaxed a couple of visitors into helping him paint the huts. They all seemed to enjoy themselves until the beeswax mix ran out, then we had another cup of tea!



The highlight of the weekend was on Saturday night when Gary set up his outdoor theatre under the shelter of the big shed to the delight of members and visitors alike. We watched and giggled with laughter at the antics of Jeff Dunham and his puppets while a few of the nearby campers wandered over for a look. About twenty people stayed with their chairs, drinks and nibbles to watch "The Man From Snowy River" which was a magnificent spectacle on the big screen and in such a perfect environment.

We will most definitely organise another film night for those of you unable to attend this time.

Lyn Patton ☐

AMONGST FRIENDS

FRIENDS GROUP ASSIST PARKS VICTORIA STAFF AT THE 2008 ROYAL MELBOURNE SHOW

Friends of Kurth Kiln members volunteered to help Parks Victoria on Saturday 27 September at the Royal Melbourne Show display. The Parks Victoria stand in the Government Expo Building was eye-catching and very attractive. The curved panels around the walls featured the various types of parks in Victoria: Marine, Underwater, Coastal, Urban, Mountains and Bush.

During the day "Ranger Roo" made several visits, hugging both children and adults; always gathering a huge crowd around him. At the entrance to the display was a Ranger Roo cut out, where many parents and grandparents took photos of their children. Five computer stations provided activity entertainment with pre-loaded games



Looking for clues

and environmental stories. An invitation to join the Ranger Roo Club was part of the promotional hand-out. The Feature Creature Challenge was a great success with the children. Once they found the five animals (some hidden in a hollow log) and their corresponding information signs, an attending Ranger signed their qualifying certificate.



Filling in the sheets

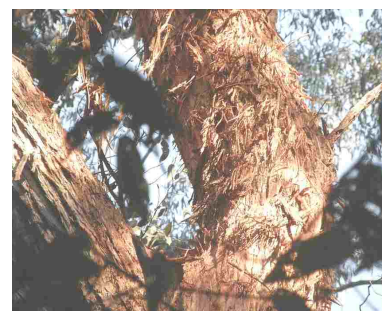
LOOKING AT A FEED TREE ON THORNTON TRACK

A tall Stringy Bark eucalyptus, some 45m high and about 900mm diameter at the base, has a huge pile of chips around the base and some damage to the tree about three quarters up the trunk where the trunk branches (see pictures). Jasper Hails, Friend of Kurth Kiln and President of the Gembrook Flora and Fauna group, organised a monitoring session on Monday evening 27 October. At dusk Jasper, Carmel, Glenn MacMillan, Ursula, Joy and Maree were all watching the tree, hoping to see some of the responsible animals. With three huge red spotlights they busily searched up and down the tree for any indication of activity, but unfortunately nothing could be spotted. However a Brush Tail Possum was spotted nearby, serenely foraging for its evening meal amongst the undergrowth; totally unaware of (or at least unperturbed by) being observed. Yellow Bellied Gliders (*Petaurus australis*) are reportedly using specific eucalypt

trees as an important ingredient of their diet, licking sap from cuts made with their sharp incisors through the bark. They may use a number of trees within their home range in turn, depending on seasonal food resources and breeding.

Andrew Musgrove, Ranger Parks Victoria Gembrook Office, came and inspected the tree on Melbourne Cup Day. He encouraged the group to persist with monitoring the tree.

Ursula Klink



BOROONDARA WALKING CLUB visits Kurth Kiln for a Bushwalk on Sunday July 6

The group enjoyed the day and indicated that they would come back in 2009 and walk to Gilwell Park. After the walk Catherine Arthur, Boroondara Bushwalking Club Inc, organiser of the walk, sent us the following article:

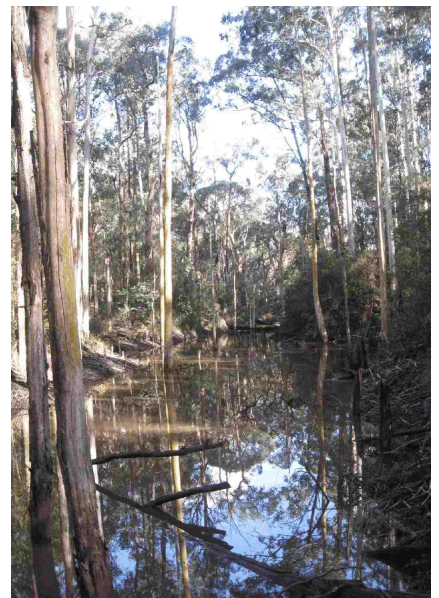
The Bunyip State Park area offers a number of walks of various grades for Boroondara Bushwalking Club; Mortimer's Track and Four Brothers, being popular walks. However, looking for something that had not been on our recent Walks Program, upon trawling the Parks Victoria website I clicked on the link to Kurth Kiln Regional Park. This area was unknown to me so I contacted Andy at the local Gembrook Parks Victoria office. Soon afterwards I was talking to Alfred Klink of the Friends of Kurth Kiln Group. Alfred's response was instant and spontaneous – he would be delighted to give our group a tour of the Kiln on Sunday, 6 July. Ursula was then put on the telephone to discuss walk options. I readily agreed to her accompanying me and two friends on our walk preview scheduled for Monday, 9 June.

Ursula's intimate knowledge of the local tracks and love of the bush and her pleasure in sharing this is instantly evident. Imagine our delight walking alongside Tomahawk Creek with water bubbling beside us! The week before we had walked in Long Forest, and not a trace of water was to be found in the creek bed. Our appreciation of the work and projects initiated and completed by Parks Victoria and the Friends of Kurth Kiln was to grow throughout the day: a delightful, sturdy footbridge over Tomahawk Creek, affording the ideal photographic opportunity, as was the viewing platform at Shiprock Falls, with the promise that on our return walk the tumbling water over these powerful granite boulders would be twofold. A magical moment was when a male lyrebird ran across Shepherd Creek Track some ten metres ahead of us and whilst we did not spy the Bunyip on this outing, certainly Monkhouse Dam would be a good place to start the search for this all-elusive mythical creature of the dreamtime, or more sensibly, a platypus!

There is a particular lushness here. Overhead, the magnificent and powerful Mountain Ash so proudly stand upright. Tree ferns and undergrowth are soft under foot and the constant chatter of birds is heard. This writer would like to believe that perhaps this small pocket of our much loved Australian bush has not been dealt too harshly by drought.

Here are reflections of some of the 18 members of our Club who visited Kurth Kiln Regional Park –

- The highlight for me was Monkhouse Dam, from both ends, and the magnificent reflections of the trees in the water. There was no wind so the reflections were magnificent.
- I enjoyed learning about the construction and use of the Kurth Kiln. What an innovative way to approach the World War II petrol shortages by using charcoal. We can learn from this in our search for alternative energies today.
- The sight and sound of running water was such a pleasure in these dry times.
- Really interesting to learn an aspect of local history – I did not know anything about the use of charcoal in World War II.
- I particularly liked the start and finish of the walk. They were through forest with undergrowth of ferns, bright green. I enjoyed the water rippling in Tomahawk Creek, then there was the dam with beautiful reflections, so still and calm.
- I had a most enjoyable day, a touch of history and a walk of variety. The bush was majestic and the houses, at the Kiln were memorable.
- I particularly liked the first bridge and the sound of running water and the musty smells of the bush.
- Forest, fern trees, running creek, perfect weather!



Monkhouse Dam

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Alfred and Ursula for their generous hospitality. We look forward to our next walk in Kurth Kiln Regional Park. Catherine Arthur ☐

BUSH WALK TO GILWELL PARK

During the past few months a number of walking clubs enjoyed a walk all the way through the bush tracks to Gilwell Park. To the left of Gilwell track is the Lyrebird Drive, where a number of informative interpretation boards are installed beside the track as you get closer to Gilwell Park. There the Clark Creek is crossed over on Ferny Walk, on a single bearer beam (part of a disintegrated bridge), hanging onto a wooden handrail.

At Lochan Dam the delightful Yellow Robin Path leads again over another bridge across Clark Creek to the Hoadley Training Ground Chapel, where much information is on display to read and look at.

There are many interesting sights to see at Gilwell Park, including the Camp Site Circle and the W. D. Kennedy Memorial Chapel. Ursula Klink ☐



Clark Creek Bridge

REFLECTIONS

RUNNING ON EMPTY, the story of the Charcoal Gas Producers

Responses to the Presentation given at Kurth Kiln by Don Bartlett

Don Bartlett, President Engineering Heritage Victoria, came to our Kurth Kiln meeting in September with his Gas Producer PowerPoint Show. It included technical details about Charcoal Production, Gas Producers and Producer Gas, as well as historical data. He spoke about the chemistry of Producer Gas. "The ideal charcoal", Don said jokingly, "is compact, free from dust, regular in size and gives a gas free from tars and injurious products. It does not 'coke' the generator, does not absorb water, does not soil the clothes and does not have an offensive odour. **In short – it doesn't exist!**"



Don and his wife Catherine at Kurth Kiln

Don's Presentation proved to be a very popular subject. It attracted an audience of over 30 people and we have received a number of feed-backs as well as compliments on the initiative. Ted Alderson from Gembrook wrote the Report below, followed by Bryce Francis' (a friend of Henk and Riet Bouck) 'Memories of our Gas Producer'.

REPORT ON THE PowerPoint PRESENTATION of DON BARTLETT at KURTH KILN.

by Ted Alderson

Kurth Kiln was one of the first landmarks my family and I visited when we moved from Picton in New South Wales to build our new home in Gembrook, which was way back in 2000. Since then I have visited the area around Kurth Kiln many times. When I saw the notice at the Gembrook Post Office that there was going to be an expert by the name of Don Bartlett, President of Engineering Heritage Victoria, coming to Kurth Kiln to give a presentation on Producer Gas and the Australian Motorist, I made a mental note that this was something I should not miss. The more I thought about it the more I realized how little I knew about it.

I was born and grew up at Leura in the Blue Mountains, and as a child I had plenty of opportunities to enjoy the waterfalls, bush walks and great scenery that are associated with living in that area. I have seen the areas at Katoomba where a coalmine existed around 1850 and the remains of an aerial ropeway (flying fox) that carried kerosene shale from the mines near the Ruined Castle (a rock formation) in Jamison Valley. The aerial ropeway collapsed during high winds and the cables that had been made in Germany still lie amidst the undergrowth on the floor of the valley. After the failure of the ropeway, there was a narrow gauge railway laid around the base of the cliffs and trolleys of shale were pushed by manpower to the point where they were hauled to the top of the cliffs. They were taken to Sydney by bullock wagons and then to England by sailing ship, where the kerosene shale was put into retorts and refined. The shale was eventually worked out, or became uneconomical as other forms of fuel became more popular or accessible. The same affected the use of charcoal for Gas Producer Units, and Gas Producer Units themselves.

My father had been in the transport business between Sydney and Katoomba and I think the restrictions that had been placed on those in that type of industry were what caused him to turn to open a quarry at Medlow Bath. He was then able to supply sand and gravel to builders for concrete, bricklayers' sand, and bush stone for rockeries and ironstone for dry stone walls and black soil for gardeners.

I clearly remember that among the trucks that he used at various times there was a Maple Leaf truck which was supposed to run by way of the gas producer, I seem to remember the unit on the Maple Leaf truck was installed behind the driver's cabin, although the position of the unit on the truck may have been elsewhere. I also remember he found that it was a terrible thing to start and it didn't stay in his possession very long. From what I can remember it was advisable to stay well away from him and the truck when it needed to be used. As a six year old I was also told to stay well away from it probably because of the dangers associated with carbon monoxide gas.

On the day Don Bartlett gave his PowerPoint presentation I was one of around thirty people who had the opportunity of seeing the various units on permanent loan to Kurth Kiln for the Gas Producer display. It was interesting to see the name "Electrolux" on one of the units – the name that is now well known to me for manufacturing vacuum cleaners. Some other manufacturers went on to produce other things – Humes, Ajax, NASCO, Malcolm Moore etc.

The name given to Don Bartlett's PowerPoint presentation was "Running on Empty" a story about Producer gas as an alternative motor fuel during the 1939-45 fuel crisis. Great Britain and France went to war with Germany and in September of 1939 Prime Minister R.G. Menzies announced "Australia is also at war". It is an account of how the Australian people and businesses coped with their transport needs over the next six years.

Points brought up included;

- Why there was a need,
- The options.
- Social snapshot
- History
- Producer gas.
- Parts of a GPU
- Operation of a GPU
- Manufacturers
- Charcoal & After the war.



Fuel restrictions were needed because the war threatened fuel supply lines, and Australia was unable to store fuel in large quantities. There was pressure from the British Government and there were currency problems. In July 1940 petrol rationing allowed for 40 miles a week! And in June 1941 the allowance was reduced to 20 miles a week. The options for the population were to put the car up on blocks, use public transport, walk, ride a pushbike or try alternative fuels. People turned to Producer Gas but this had various drawbacks. It was dirty and inconvenient, there was a lack of confidence in its use and there was a lack of power and increased engine wear.

At the start of the Second World War there was reportedly 820,000 GPU. Of these, Germany had 43%, France 13%, Russia 13%, Sweden 9%, United Kingdom 1% and Australia 5% or 41,000 plus DIY units. The United States had six registered units. The US had fuel supplies readily available, unlike Australia where it had to be imported. The minimum weekly wage was about £5 in 1939. Petrol was 1s 8p a gallon which, when adjusted to 2008 prices, was \$1.32 per litre. Early development of Producer Gas [PG] began in Germany in 1839 by Bischof. In 1860 there was the first successful gas engine, in 1872 PG was used to power an airship, and in 1901 PG was used to power a car. CSIR in 1940 experimented with making charcoal from Australian hardwood. Charcoal is heated wood incompletely burned. RACV was very active in encouraging motorists to use PG.

To make PG, air is passed over Charcoal at 800° C. Oxygen from the air combines with carbon from the charcoal to form Carbon Monoxide [CO]. It is an odourless and colourless gas, combustible and explosive, highly poisonous and nasty stuff. PG is a mixture of the Nitrogen in the air and CO at a ratio of 2 : 1. Nitrogen is inert and only serves as an expanding medium.

The performance of Australian hardwood: 13,000BTU/lb [10,000 BTU/hr- 1hp]

Consumption 0.8 – 1.0 lbs/ BHP hour. [1 telegraph pole = 1000 miles]

About 25% less efficient, operation cost 20-25% compared with petrol. Charcoal was 6s per 50lb bag.

It was best to refuel before half empty [every hour (50miles) or so].

Gas Producer Units [GPU] could be rear mounted for cars, or on a one-wheel trailer for ease of parking. On trucks it could be side mounted, (the one I remember was behind the cabin), or mounted on a two wheel trailer for buses. It has even been used on motorcycles. GPUs are usually heavy and could weigh up to 500 lbs empty.

One of their operational drawbacks was the lengthy start up procedure: check [top-up] charcoal hopper and close lid, then turn on petrol and start engine, turn off petrol and draw kerosene, adjust choke and throttle to a fast idle, crack open the gas butterfly and light the GPU, jiggle with the controls until it would run on gas. All of this took about 10 to 15 minutes. Then there were other items of messy servicing to be carried out either daily or every 600 miles.

At the time GPUs were in use there were no automatic transmissions or synchromesh gear boxes. Drivers were required to give hand signals when pulling out from the kerb as well as releasing the handbrake when on a hill. Drivers often had to manually control engine adjustments like "spark". Drivers needed to double clutch when changing gears and some vehicles still had gate changes.

By this time in I was unable to keep up with Don's explanation of the technicalities and I was also running out of paper to write my notes on, but, as I remember, Victorian Railways had Rail Motors and Rail Cars running on GPU, a Bentley was raced at Mt Panorama in 1939, and the RACQ roadside assistance motorcycle had a GPU in the sidecar. The use of PG peaked in 1942, and the fuel crisis eased in Australia in 1945, but petrol rationing continued until an appeal to the High Court in 1949.

Don's presentation gave credit to a large number of people and organizations for their help in providing information and research on the subject. Further contributions of information and material are welcome. email; heritage@consuleng.com.au. The December 2007 Newsletter of the Friends of Kurth Kiln has a story headed REFLECTIONS, by Mr Graeme Tibbett. Graeme gives a very interesting account of his "Memories of my wartime experience of travelling with these devices".

Ted Alderson □

MY MEMORIES OF OUR GAS PRODUCER

by Bryce Francis, Woori Yallock

During the 1939-1944 war I was living with my parents in Wellington, New Zealand. Petrol was rationed and my father decided to add a gas-producer to his 1939 Ford V8. I was 13 years old at this time.

There were three main elements to this device, a cylinder containing a burning chamber for coke, a flat cooling tray across the top of the motor, and a cylinder containing circular fibrous pads which filtered solids from smoke and ash from the burning coke. The cooled and clean gas was then delivered to power the car.

Every morning it was my job to clean out the residue of the burnt coke, using a straight rod with an approx 4 inch piece of metal fixed at a right angle to the handle. The burnt coke left an ash residue and a hard glasslike metallic substance called clinker. After the residue was removed the furnace was then refilled with fresh coke.

The fibre pads in the filter had to be checked, and damaged or heavily soiled ones had to be replaced with new pads. Occasionally sparks from the fire would light these pads and some or all could be completely burnt out.

To restart the fire I had to start the car on petrol and use an oil soaked taper to generate a flame. This flame was sucked into the furnace until the fire was well established. The furnace door was then closed.

The car had two accelerators, one for gas and one for petrol. I have no idea how long my father could switch from petrol to gas, but probably no more than a couple of miles. As the gas did not power the car as well as petrol, on steep hills or for quick passes he would use both accelerators, or just petrol. I can recall him saying that to drive the car properly he should have been born a centipede!

After the war the car was restored to its original state.

Bryce Francis □

FRIENDS OF KURTH KILN

a part of the Friends Groups of Parks Victoria

Application for Membership

I / we

M... ..
First Name Last Name

hereby apply for membership in the "Friends of Kurth Kiln Group"

My/our membership category is: (tick one)

A Friend Membership at \$5:00 annual fee

A Group / Fam. Membership at \$10:00 annual fee.

My/our current address is

City State Postcode

Telephone Fax

E-mail

Signature Date / / 2007

The following details are helpful in the administration of the Group and for future reference. You may furnish this information at your discretion:

Occupation/Profession

Hobbies age

Marital status: married single other

Spouse's Name

Children; under the age of 18

Payment of your Membership contributions can be made at the next Meeting, or included with this application and sent to:

Friends of Kurth Kiln, Post Office Box 169 WOORI YALLOCK Vic. 3139

Telephone/Fax (03) 5967 4201; E-mail: auk@c031.aone.net.au

BILL PARKER 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

In August Gembrook MP Tammy Lobato presented Bill Parker with a Certificate of Appreciation for his 50 years of volunteer service to the Gembrook Cemetery Trust. At the presentation, MP Tammy Lobato said "Bill's achievement was outstanding, few people can lay claim to such dedication in a voluntary role" Bill was one of the longest Cemetery Trust serving members.

Bill, a member of the Friends of Kurth Kiln group, still comes regularly with his wife Lorna to the meetings, where he shares his local history knowledge with the group. His latest story is below.

History of the trees in Main Street Gembrook

The bad bush-fires of 1926 burnt through the Tomahawk Valley where both the Dyers and EAC Russell had mills. EAC Russell's mill was higher up the creek and it was burnt, but Dyers' mill was saved. After the fire, when the rains came, a lot of little blackwood trees came up, so when they were big enough to transplant, the Council asked Mr. Neville to do the job. Mr. Neville had been a farm labourer in England and was working on Dyers' mill. He took a number of the blackwoods to plant along the main street of Gembrook along with a certain number of oak trees from Nobelius' Nursery in Emerald. (My father also bought trees from this nursery and planted them on our land, Belvedere, which had been bought by my brother in 1920. Last year Belvedere was sold to developers, and the Council acquired two blocks from them to retain this area of beautiful mature trees as a reserve.)

One of the loveliest of these oak trees in the main street of Gembrook is just opposite the railway station, outside the site of the General Store. No longer standing, the store at the time of the planting of the oaks, about 75 years ago, was owned by Mr Knight. He once told me that through its first summer he had watered the oak tree outside his store, and doubtless that is partly why it is such a nice tree now.

Recently I had a visit from Mr Knight's grand daughter. When I mentioned to her about her grandfather planting the trees in the main street, she told me that she remembered hearing about it from her grandmother. When Mr Neville retired, he often used to come shooting rabbits on the farm where I was employed. At the time I was round 14 and had a twelve gauge shot gun. Mr Neville had the same type of gun, and when he would travel down on Puffing Billy to Melbourne to see the doctor about his heart condition, he would also buy the cartridges for his gun there. I would give him four shillings and three pence to buy me a 25 cartridge box too.

When he was young Mr Neville had been a big powerful man, who was quite fond of his grog. If a fight developed in the pub apparently he would wrap his arms round the culprit's chest and give him a good hug until the culprit took no further interest in the fight! Mr Neville went on to live to a good age, then one day as he was carrying wood in for the fire he dropped dead from a heart attack.

Bill Parker

Friends of Kurth Kiln
Post office Box 169
Woori Yallock
Victoria 3139

POSTAGE



To